

Fremont School (Fourteenth District School)  
139 South Second West Street  
Salt Lake City  
Salt Lake County  
Utah

HABS No. U-24

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. U-24 HABS

## FREMONT SCHOOL (FOURTEENTH DISTRICT SCHOOL)

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Location: 139 South Second West Street, Salt Lake City,  
Salt Lake County, Utah  
Latitude: 40° 45' 57" N Longitude: 111° 53' 54" W

Present Owner: Salt Lake City School District

Present Occupant: Unoccupied

Present Use: Warehouse

Statement of  
Significance:

This school is the only remaining link between the old ecclesiastical 22 district system and the new Salt Lake City School District, established by the Utah State Legislature in 1890.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

Trustees of the Fourteenth School District, 1889  
Salt Lake City School District, 1890 - present

2. Date of erection: 1890

3. Architect: Henry Monheim

4. Builder: John H. Balwin

5. Original plan and construction: See Section I. E.

6. Alterations: Substantially original in plan. Belfry removed in 1920.

B. Historican Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

By an act of the State Legislature of 1890, the "free school" system was established. This act provided for the election of a board of education by the voters of the city, the schools to be placed under management of said board, whose duty it was to provide such facilities as would give every person of school age a free education. The board was duly elected, consisting of two members from each of the five municipal wards of the city. The first board members were: P. L. Williams, Hiram Johnson, Charles E. Mitchener, Thomas C. Armstrong, Jr., George D. Pyper, George W. Snow, Lemuel W. Colbath, William J.

Newman, John M. Pike, William Nelson, Richard W. Young, George M. Scott (Mayor of City, Ex-officio President).

The only remaining connecting link between the old ecclesiastical twenty-two district (ward) system and the new Salt Lake City District was the Fourteenth School. School construction was initiated under the old system in 1889, and completed under the consolidated district system in December of 1890. In 1894, it was re-named Fremont School after John C. Fremont. In addition to being the first "free school" built, it was also acclaimed as the first genuine educational facility in the city. (Most of the schools already in use were ecclesiastical buildings or annexes). Fremont School was quite modern for its day, with gas fixtures, 600 square foot classrooms, and a tower belfry with an onion bulb roof (removed in 1920).

At first the building housed both elementary and high schools, but it proved too small for both and in 1892 and 1893 the high school was relocated to the Clayton Building on South Temple Street. Fremont School was closed in 1938, and was in disuse until World War II when it was used by the U.S. Army for training classes. After that it served as a day center until February, 1946, and finally as a Veterans' Training Center. The building is presently used for dead storage by the school district and is up for sale.

#### C. Sources of Information:

##### 1. Primary and unpublished sources:

"The History of Educational Administration in Salt Lake City, 1890-1901", Karl E. Lingwall, Master's Thesis, University of Utah, 1967.

Interview with Janice Keller, Public Relations Assistant to Superintendent of Salt Lake City School District.

Schematic Plans, early photographs from Walter Jensen, Director of Buildings & Grounds, Salt Lake City School District.

##### 2. Bibliography:

Deseret News, September 20, 1893.

First Public School Report, Salt Lake City School District, July 30, 1891.

Salt Lake Tribune, January 1, 1891.

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D. Likely Sources not yet Investigated:

History of Public Education in Utah, John Clifton Moffat,  
Provo, Utah, 1946.

A History of Education in Utah, 1870-1895, LaVerne Bane,  
Doctoral dissertation, Stanford University.

E. Supplemental Material:

An early Salt Lake Tribune account written January 1, 1891  
describes the school as follows:

"The finest structure ever erected in this city for educational purposes is the Fourteenth district school building built the past year. It is one of the most striking evidences of a change in the administrative system of Salt Lake City. Edward M. Collins, Principal of the school, said that from six to seven hundred pupils pursuing the courses "from primary through academic could be comfortably cared for within the spacious walls."

The building has three flats and basement, and is so constructed with reference to staircases, exits, etc. as to facilitate its being emptied of pupils in ninety seconds.

In connection with this idea a system of electric wires is being put throughout the house for the purpose of dispatching instantly any character of alarm from any point to all portions of the building. The pupils will also be trained as to their proper moves in any case of emergency.

On each flat there is located a long hose, always connected with hydraulic water pressure. The entire building is warmed by a system of low pressure, self regulating, automatic draft, steam heating, this entire plant costing in the neighborhood of \$4000. One other most essential feature in a public building was not overlooked in the construction. Running up in the center of the great walls is located a thorough system of air flues, conducting through radiators to each department a complete plan of ventilation. To further the idea each door is provided with easily adjusted transoms.

The first portion of basement is handsomely and comfortably fitted up into lunch rooms and play rooms, to be used by the pupils for those purposes in stormy weather.

The primary and under branches are located in the bottom portion of the building, the idea being to locate the higher branches and larger pupils in the upper part.

Adjoining the Principal's office on the second floor is a handsomely equipped and comfortably furnished library which is also dedicated to the education and refinement of the pupils.

The outside walls are made of Utah gray (sand) stone, ashlar work, which, together with the large glass door, double entrances, and numerous plate glass windows from basement to top present a grand architectural appearance.

The plans were adopted and the building put well under way by the trustees elected in July 1889 under the old district system--Messrs. G. S. Erb, E. R. Clute and William Nelson. The contract cost, exclusive of excavation of the basement, and also exclusive of the plumbing was \$38,500 for the building. At the time of the change from the district to the consolidated school system for the city the new Board of Education accepted the plans and contract, pushing work to completion. The architect says the builder lost \$4000 to \$5000 on his contract, and in consideration of this and of the further fact that the great demand for building material made it impossible for months at a stretch to get what was wanted, the forfeit provided in the contract for non-completion of the building by September 14, 1890 was not enforced. It is, without doubt, the cheapest building constructed in the city the past season. It was completed and accepted about the middle of December, and is now in full occupancy. The contrast between this, the finest school building in the Territory, if not the finest building of any sort, is illustrated herewith by a view of a school house under the old regime in the district adjoining to the west. This difference it is hoped to carry into all the school work of the future as compared with that of the past."

It is also reported that the total cost was "in all about \$45,000."

Prepared by John Giusti, AIA  
August, 1967

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest: Architecturally, Fremont School represents Salt Lake City's first departure from single story church annexes to a more urban and efficient educational environment.
2. Condition of fabric: Good

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B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This school has three stories plus basement and attic. Its cross plan is 77' 6" x 79' 2".
2. Foundations: Light grey kyune sandstone.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Walls are of light grey kyune sandstone coursed range ashlar. Common bond brick on the rear matches the sandstone color.
4. Structural system, framing: Masonry supports a timber roof frame composed of 2" x 9" and 2" x 5" rafters, 6" x 8" beams, and 2" x 6" ridges. Framing for the original belfry is of 8" x 8" members.
5. Porches and stoops: The two elaborate sandstone front porches with sandstone steps reflect a Richardsonian influence. Rear porches have concrete stoops, pipe rails and wood roofs.
6. Chimneys: A single brick chimney serves the furnace.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Front doors are double and each has a vertical glass light and three horizontal wood panels. No rear doors remain.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Windows are double hung with one-over-one lights.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Roofs are hipped with sheet metal covering and a 1:1 slope. Gables at the ends of the cross have metal combs at the peak.
  - b. Cornice: A molded wood cornice projects two feet from the masonry. It could not be reached for detailed measurement.
  - c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The original belfry with onion bulb roof was removed in 1920, but framing can still be seen in the attic.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: On all floors a central circulation space joins north and south stair halls. One classroom on the east and two on the west open to the central hall on the first and second floors. The second and third floors have rooms over the west porches. On the third floor there was a classroom on each side of the central hall, nowever the west classroom has been parti-

tioned to create an extra classroom.

2. Stairways: Stairways at north and south ends ascend from basement to the third floor. Balusters and newel post blocks are set into the rail to prevent students from sliding down it.
3. Flooring: Flooring is hardwood except for concrete in furnace room.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are plaster with wood wainscots. Ceilings are plaster throughout. Walls and ceilings are painted creamy yellow throughout. Stair newels rails and balusters are painted dark brown.
5. Doorways and doors: Interior doorways have four-light transoms over the doors. The doorways have hardwood trim with square pieces at the intersections of vertical and horizontal moldings. The eight horizontal and two vertical wood door panels are decorated with strips of vertical reeding.
6. Decorative features and trim: Elaborate plaster rosettes around original gas fixtures occur in a variety of types on the classroom and hall ceilings.
7. Notable hardware: Interior doors have ornamental stock hardware.
8. Lighting, type of fixtures: Original gas fixtures have been replaced by electricity.
9. Heating: Steam was piped from low pressure, automatic draft steam boiler through flues to radiators.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. Orientation: The front of Fremont School faces Second West Street 94' 10" from the center line and is 238' 8" north of the center of Second South Street.
2. Outbuildings: None of the existing outbuildings is original.
3. Landscaping and walks, enclosures: Walks extend from each west entrance to Second West Street. The grounds are surrounded with a modern chain link fence.

Prepared by C. W. Barrow, Jr.  
Student Assistant Architect  
Utah Project 1967  
June 23, 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This record is part of a Utah Survey conducted in the summers of 1967 and 1968 under joint sponsorship of the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation.

Field work, historic research and record drawings were done under the direction of Project Supervisor Paul Goeldner, AIA (Texas Tech University) assisted by Project Historian John Giusti, AIA (University of Utah). Photographs were made by P. Kent Fairbanks of Salt Lake City.

Student Assistant Architects on the 1967 team were Robert M. Swanson, and Charles W. Barrow, (University of Texas) and Kenneth L. Lambert and Keith Sorenson, (University of Utah). 1968 Student Assistant Architects were Keith Sorenson, Charles D. Harker and Robert Schriever, (University of Utah) and Donald G. Prycer, (Texas A. & M. University).